

The very first bill that House Republicans passed was a break for tax cheats that also benefited large corporations and billionaires while adding \$114 billion to the deficit.

Last time Republicans controlled the House, they enacted a \$2 trillion tax cut for the 1 percent and big corporations. All the while, House Democrats continue to work to hold large corporations accountable and ensure they are paying their fair share.

We are working to strengthen the middle class by creating good-paying jobs, lowering middle-class taxes, and protecting Social Security and Medicare because we understand that a strong middle class is essential to a strong economy, to a strong democracy, and to a strong America.

HONORING CHIEF LOU DEKMAR ON HIS RETIREMENT

(Mr. FERGUSON asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FERGUSON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor my friend, Chief Lou Dekmar, from LaGrange, Georgia, on his well-deserved retirement.

For 50 years, Chief Dekmar has protected and defended our communities as a law enforcement officer. He has long been a hero in the community, protecting the lives of citizens as well as fellow officers.

Serving nearly 30 years as police chief in LaGrange, Georgia, Chief Dekmar's unwavering dedication to ensuring that the folks of Troup County stayed safe and secure was second to none.

Chief Dekmar embodies the true heart of a leader and his work to heal the community and establish racial reconciliation in the city were just a few of the many accomplishments he had throughout his decorated career.

Mr. Speaker, I thank him for his unbelievable devotion to serving the people of Georgia and congratulate him on a well-earned retirement.

KILLING IN MEMPHIS

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I am the Congressman who represents the great city of Memphis.

Right now much of the national media is looking at Memphis, as there was an awful killing of a 29-year-old African-American man by five police officers within the last few weeks. The five police officers have been fired by the police department for violating their oath. The DA will announce charges in a few hours.

It could be a situation where people want to exercise their First Amendment rights to protest the actions of the police department, and people should, but they should be peaceful and calm.

We have a new DA, we have a new U.S. Attorney, and we have a new police director. They are the right people at the right time to bring about reform and to deal with this case to see that justice is rendered.

I grieve for the life of Tyre Nichols whose life should not have been extinguished. He was an outstanding young man, and it is extremely sad that he was killed.

I pray for my city.

NATIONAL SCHOOL CHOICE WEEK

(Mr. FLOOD asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise to celebrate National School Choice Week.

School choice is about giving families the freedom to choose the best education possible for their children, regardless of their learning style or home address or financial situation.

Every parent in America wants to give their child the best education possible, and Nebraska has great options: public, private, homeschools. Not everyone has the means to access their option of choice.

I believe we should fund the students, not the systems. When funding for education follows students to the school of their choice, families win. Nebraska is one of only two States in the Nation that has not passed a school choice program.

I am excited about these opportunities and look forward to giving parents the choice.

CENSORSHIP OF CONSERVATIVE VOICES

(Mr. GOOD of Virginia asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. GOOD of Virginia. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to voice my concerns with the ongoing censorship of conservative voices.

We are all aware of the leftist bias and discrimination on social media. The recent Twitter files tell a sinister tale of censorship and discrimination against conservatives and Republicans across the country. But the campaign of censorship and discrimination by the left also extends to satellite and cable TV.

The Nation's largest satellite TV provider, DIRECTV, has threatened another conservative-leaning cable news network. First, it was OAN a year ago, and now DIRECTV has threatened to deplatform Newsmax, the fourth largest cable news network.

Competition is the heart of the American economy, but the mainstream media is an anti-American institution that has no regard for the First Amendment rights of conservatives or protecting a platform for all viewpoints.

DIRECTV'S actions are a clear effort to discriminate against conservative voices.

DIRECTV pays leftist outlets to carry their content on their satellite network, but conservative outlets are not treated the same.

Many liberal channels, with a fraction of Newsmax's audience, receive payment from DIRECTV. This bias is blatant and egregious, and Congress should look into this censorship and address the discrimination against conservative voices.

RECOGNIZING ALAN LOVING

(Mr. GUEST asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. GUEST. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize and to encourage my longtime friend, Alan Loving. Alan serves as pastor for students and families at First Baptist Church of Madison.

Alan has dedicated his life as a minister of the Gospel and has impacted countless lives for eternity during his many years of service as a youth minister.

Recently, Alan suffered a life-changing accident that has left him paralyzed from the waist down. We praise God for Alan's continued recovery and rehabilitation.

God's word tells us in Proverbs, "As iron sharpens iron, so one man sharpens another."

Throughout this journey, Alan and his family have been an inspiration to me and so many others throughout our community. We have been sharpened by his strength and his faithfulness.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today to let Alan know that Mississippi loves him and his family. We are praying for him; his wife, Courtney; his daughters, Mary Addison and Anna Claire. We are inspired by his determination and faith.

CONCERNS AT OUR SOUTHERN BORDER

(Mr. ROSE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ROSE. Mr. Speaker, the Biden administration continues to fail the American people.

Just last month, Customs and Border Protection had 251,487 migrant encounters along the southern border, the highest number of encounters ever recorded in a single month. Despite our constant calls to get this crisis under control, it has only gotten worse. Either President Biden is trying and utterly failing, or worse, not trying at all.

Since President Biden has taken office, there have been more than 4.5 million migrant encounters at our southern border, and December marked the tenth straight month with more than 200,000 encounters, a trend that has never been recorded before. None of these statistics include the over 1.2 million known got-aways who have

evaded our overwhelmed U.S. Border Patrol agents.

Mr. Speaker, I rise for all middle Tennesseans to say: Mr. President, please do your job and secure our border.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

ELECTING MEMBERS TO A CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the Democratic Caucus, I offer a privileged resolution and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 60

Resolved, That the following named Members be, and are hereby, elected to the following standing committee of the House of Representatives:

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS: Mr. Hoyer, Ms. Kaptur, Mr. Bishop of Georgia, Ms. Lee of California, Ms. McCollum, Mr. Ruppersberger, Ms. Wasserman Schultz, Mr. Cuellar, Ms. Pingree, Mr. Quigley, Mr. Kilmer, Mr. Cartwright, Ms. Meng, Mr. Pocan, Mr. Aguilar, Ms. Lois Frankel of Florida, Mrs. Watson Coleman, Mrs. Torres of California, Mr. Case, Mr. Espallat, Mr. Harder of California, Ms. Wexton, Mr. Trone, Ms. Underwood, Mrs. Lee of Nevada, Mr. Morelle.

Mr. AGUILAR (during the reading). Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be considered as read and printed in the RECORD.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

STRATEGIC PRODUCTION RESPONSE ACT

GENERAL LEAVE

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks on the legislation and to insert extraneous material on H.R. 21.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Washington?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 5 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill, H.R. 21.

The Chair appoints the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. ROUZER) to preside over the Committee of the Whole.

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IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole

House on the state of the Union for the consideration of the bill (H.R. 21) to provide for the development of a plan to increase oil and gas production under oil and gas leases of Federal lands under the jurisdiction of the Secretary of Agriculture, the Secretary of Energy, the Secretary of the Interior, and the Secretary of Defense in conjunction with a drawdown of petroleum reserves from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, with Mr. ROUZER in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The CHAIR. Pursuant to the rule, the bill is considered read the first time.

General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed 1 hour equally divided and controlled by the majority leader and the minority leader, or their respective designees.

The gentlewoman from Washington (Mrs. RODGERS) and the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) each will control 30 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Washington (Mrs. RODGERS).

Mrs. RODGERS of Washington. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I rise in support of H.R. 21, the Strategic Production Response Act.

Two weeks ago, this body sent a strong message that we must ensure our Nation's Strategic Petroleum Reserve will not advance the energy interests of China over the energy security interests of Americans.

This bill today will help ensure this vital American energy asset and American security interests will not be drained away for nonemergency, political purposes. This bill is about restoring America's energy security. It provides a path towards making energy more affordable for Americans who are looking to us to help ease the pain at the pump.

H.R. 21 does this by preserving the Strategic Petroleum Reserve for its vital and central purpose: to provide the oil supplies Americans need during true emergencies—emergencies like supply disruptions that threaten the Nation's economy, or the loss of oil production due to hurricanes and other disasters.

Put simply, under this bill, if an administration chooses to use the reserve for nonemergency political purposes, it will first have to develop a plan that an equal amount would be reinstated from American energy resources.

The SPR should be used as a tool of last resort. This is sensible energy policy. It is also urgent policy. At present, the SPR's ability to protect Americans has been put at risk. More than 250 million barrels of oil, approximately 40 percent of the reserve, has been drawn down in less than 2 years. This is more than all of the former Presidents in history combined. It is all to cover up historically high gas prices in an election year. This is irresponsible.

The Biden administration has undermined our Nation's ability to respond

to true energy emergencies by mismanaging our Nation's strategic energy stockpile. At the same time, the administration has taken every action to suppress America's mighty energy production abilities. Unbelievably, the Biden administration has turned to Venezuela and Saudi Arabia to pump more oil instead of working to lift their regulatory restraints on American energy producers.

America's oil production and refining capacity remains 1 million barrels below peak levels during the prior administration. We have the world's most abundant resources and the capacity to produce millions more barrels per day.

America should never be at the mercy of OPEC or Russia. Energy security is economic security and it is national security. It is all connected. It is foundational to everything. We should be unleashing American energy on all fronts.

Don't forget, Mr. Chair, the United States has some of the highest environmental and labor standards in the world. We have been the leader in bringing down carbon emissions. We did this by embracing innovation and our abundant natural resources, not by shutting down entire industries.

Right now, America is suffering through the worst energy crisis in decades, and gas prices are still surging upwards. Now, President Biden's and the Democrats' radical rush-to-green agenda has made life unaffordable for people across the country. It has driven up inflation, it has strained household budgets, and it has weakened our electric grid.

Gas prices have risen to the highest levels in history. Some have been forced to pay more than \$6 a gallon. Gas prices are still 40 percent higher today, and diesel prices are up almost \$2 a gallon more than when President Biden took office.

It is time to flip the switch. It is time to end the politically motivated abuse of the SPR and focus on American energy and American security. Let's send a strong signal this Congress that we stand for energy security, preserving the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, restoring America's energy dominance, and providing for the prosperity of all Americans.

Mr. Chair, I urge support of H.R. 21, and I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. PALLONE. Mr. Chair, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Mr. Chair, I rise in opposition to H.R. 21. Once again, House Republicans are showing their true colors—bringing a bill to the floor that helps their Big Oil friends and hurts hardworking Americans.

This is a reckless and extreme bill. It will hamstring the single most important tool the Biden administration has used to fight Putin's price hike on gasoline. The chairwoman mentioned affordability, but by releasing oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the Biden administration helped bring down gas prices by over \$1.50 per gallon. Republicans call that politicizing